

The Life of Shaikh al-Albaani

May Allaah, the Most High, have Mercy upon him

In His Own Words

حَيَاةُ الْعَلَامَةِ
الْأَلْبَانِيِّ
- رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى -
بِقَاتِمِهِ

جَمْعُ وَاعْتِدَادِ
عَصَامُ مُوسَى هَادِي

المكتبة الإسلامية
عمارة - الميزان

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Introduction

All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah, the Most High, from the evils of our own selves and from our wicked deeds. Whomsoever has been guided by Allaah, none can misguide him, and whomsoever has been misguided by Allaah, none can guide him. I bear witness that there is no true god worthy of being worshipped except Allaah, Alone, without partner or associate. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His true slave and Messenger.

O you who believe! Fear Allaah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islaam (as Muslims with complete submission to Allaah). Aali

Imraan 3:102

O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam) and from him He created his wife, and from them both He created many men and women, and fear Allaah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights) and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allaah is ever an All-Watcher over you. An-Nisaa 4:1

O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him, and speak (always) the Truth, He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allaah and His Messenger, he has indeed achieved a great success. Al-Ahzaab 33: 70-71

As for what follows: Allaah blessed me with the companionship of one of the flag-bearers of the *Sunnah* of this time, our Shaikh, the *Allaamah*, the scholar of *hadith*, Muhammad Naasirud-Deen al-Albaani, may Allaah, the Most High, have mercy upon him.

From the rights of this Imaam upon me is that I make him, his call and something from his struggle and patience known, along with the fruits the Muslims have reaped from what he sowed, yet I found that many of the Shaikh's students had already beaten me to it, so may Allaah reward them with good.

So that I would not miss out on the reward that they will receive, if Allaah so wills, I wanted to follow in their footsteps and drink from the same well they took from, as it were, by writing a biography of our Shaikh but something which would be far from repetitive.

So I sought Allaah's Aid, and got ready to buckle down to it, and it occurred to me that the book that I write should be from the Shaikh's words himself, since autobiographies are the best form of biography. I began to collect what I could where the Shaikh, may Allaah have mercy upon him, spoke about himself in his widely dispersed books. When he spoke [about himself as such] it was by way of speaking about Allaah's blessings upon him.

Then I put what I collected into an order I saw suitable, and I ask Allaah to make this action purely and solely for His Face, the Most High, and that He have Mercy on our Shaikh and raises his place of abode and that He have Mercy on us when we leave this life as he did, He is the All-Hearing, the One who answers the supplications.

And may Allaah's peace and blessings be upon Muhammad and his Companions.

Esaam Moosaa Haadi

HIS MIGRATION TO SYRIA

SHAIKH AL-ALBAANI said, “Indeed the blessings of Allaah upon me are numerous such that I cannot enumerate them. Perhaps from the most important of them are the following two: the migration of my father to Syria and that he taught me his profession as a watch repairer [horologist]. The first [blessing] made learning arabic easy for me, for if we had remained in Albania I do not believe that I would have learnt a letter from it, and there is no path to the Book of Allaah or the *Sunnah* of his Prophet, صلى الله عليه وسلم, except by way of arabic. The second [blessing], learning how to repair watches, gave me spare time which I filled with seeking knowledge. It provided me with the opportunity to visit the *Dhaahiriyyah* library and other than it for many hours every day.

If I had continued to stick to carpentry, which I had initially tried to learn, it would have devoured all of my time, and as a result the paths of knowledge would have been closed in my face, [paths] whose students must have free time.

THE BEGINNING “THE FIRST THING THAT I HAD A PASSION TO READ WERE ARABIC STORIES, LIKE
OF HIS QUEST FOR those of Dhaahir [Baybars] and Antara [ibn Shaddaad a famous Arab
KNOWLEDGE poet], King Saif [ibn Dhi Yazan] and their like, then translated crime or
detective novels like Arsène Luprin and others. After which I found an
inclination towards reading books about history. Then one day at one of
the booksellers, I noticed an issue from a magazine called *Al-Manaar* amongst the books for sale
so I bought it. In it I came across a piece of research written by as-Sayyid Rasheed [Rida] in which
he was describing the book *Al-Ihyaa* by al-Ghazaali, pointing out its strengths and weaknesses.

So for the first time I across this type of knowledge-based critique and that drew me to reading the entire issue. I continued following the subject of *Al-Ihyaa* in the [book] *Al-Ihyaa* itself, with

the version in which its *hadiths* were verified by al-Haafidh al-Iraaqi, and I found myself having to borrow it since I did not have the money to purchase it.

As a result I started to read [the entire] book since the detailed verification fascinated me, such that I resolved to copy out the book or summarise it, after I had laid down a mental picture of copying out the [*hadith*] verification which was printed in the footnotes of *Al-Ihya*. I started to write out the *hadith*, “*Indeed praise for a servant can spread as far and as wide as that which is between the east and the west and yet he is not equal to the weight of a mosquito before Allaah ...*” this is how it was written in *Al-Ihya*. Al-Haafidh al-Iraaqi said, “And I have quoted it from him but have not been able to find it with such wording. In the two *Sahihs* from the *hadith* of Abu Hurayrah there occurs, “*Indeed a huge fat man will come on the Day of Resurrection and he will not weigh the weight of the wing of a mosquito in Allaah’s Sight.*”

But what did I do? I wrote down a hyphen and completed the *hadith* as it is found in the two *Sahihs* and I continued upon this so as not to attribute to Al-Haafidh al-Iraaqi something that he did not say, and I also placed the addition which I was writing from the original and to which he attributed the *hadith*, between two hyphens [=]. In those days I was new to researching and if I knew then what I know now I would have used brackets like the ones I used in my books thereafter, instead of the two hyphens.

I started to copy and then got half way through the first volume when an idea occurred to me, which was that during my work on the *hadiths*, parts of them would come by me whose words I did not understand and as a result the intending meaning of the *hadith* would not be clear to me. So I said to myself, ‘Why don’t I explain all of these words in the margins which would be a revision for me and an aid to understanding the *hadith*?’ So after I had gotten half way through the first volume I left it and started copying all over again based upon this new idea.

Every time I came across a *hadith* which had a word I couldn’t fathom I would use Ibn al-Athir’s book *Ghareeb al-Hadith* [a book explaining rare and difficult words found in *hadiths*] and dictionaries and then I would write the meaning in the margin, until the notes that I would write for myself turned out to be more than the actual text, and I carried on like this until I finished the book. I strived like this until a good method was established which helped to make concrete all those new points.

And I think this effort which I put into that study is what encouraged me and endeared to me the desire to continue upon this path, since I found myself seeking the aid of many different works on the Arabic language, figurative speech [بلاغه], and works explaining the rare and difficult words found in *hadiths* so that the text could be understood alongside its verification.

And this is what benefitted me greatly, and in reality I say: I am amazed at Allaah's Kindness to His servants, and I feel that Allaah was moving me from one step to the next. Now I reap the benefits of what I used to write and make copies of, [at that time] I did not know what was behind that writing or that copying, now I reap the benefits of some of that work. I will find writings from my early knowledge-based research that is profuse and abundant and that was due to the persistent desire to follow such research and because I found the narrations of *hadith* to be something beautiful. And I still continue, and all praise is for Allaah, to have the vigour and desire to research, but old age has its rights.

HIS CHILDREN “**INDEED FROM THE BLESSINGS OF ALLAAH, THE MIGHTY AND MAJESTIC, UPON ME IS THAT** he inspired me to name all of my sons as servants of His, and they are: Abdur-Rahmaan, Abdul-Lateef, Abdur-Razzaq from my first wife, may Allaah have mercy on her; and Abdul-Musowwir, Abdul-Muhaimin and Abdul-A'laa from my other wife, and I don't think anyone has beaten me to naming their son Abdul-Musowwir since with all of the names of narrators that I have come across in the books of the men of *hadith* and its conveyors [I never found this name]. And I ask Allaah, the Most High, to increase me in success and that He bless me in my family, **“Our Lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring those who will be the comfort of our eyes, and make us leaders for the pious.”** Furqaan 25:74

Then in 1383^{AH} [1963^{CE}] while I was in Medina, Allaah blessed me with a son who I named Muhammad, as a reminder of his, ﷺ, city and in fulfilment of his saying, *“Name yourselves with my name, but do not use my kunyaa.”* [Bukhaari and Muslim]

GIVING PRECEDENCE TO THE TRUTH OVER THE HERITAGE OF THE FOREFATHERS “I CONTINUED TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MY FATHER IN THIS DIRECTION, until Allaah guided me to the Sunnah, so I left much of what I had studied with him which he regarded as being a means of getting closer to Allaah and worship.

AL-ALBAANI AND HIS FATHER “I HAD PROCEEDED TO STUDY THE SUNNAH WITH GREAT LONGING AND ADORATION, and so when my father saw that in me he began to warn me and said, “The science of *hadith* is the profession of the bankrupt!” But despite what that differing put between us in terms of ideological outlook, near the end of his life we become very close, as he used to say at the end of every debate, ‘I do not deny that you brought me some knowledge based benefits concerning matters about which I was not on clear proof beforehand, like it not being legislated to intend to go to pray *salaah* at the graves of the righteous.’

THE BEGINNING OF HIS WORK “AND THE TRUTH IS THAT THIS AFFAIR [I.E., PRAYING *SALAAH* AT THE GRAVES OF the righteous] was from the very first reasons that led me to part from the majority of Shaikhs, since in this matter they were on the way of my father. Thus from the early things that I began which resembled knowledge-based research was that I followed up this topic in some *fiqh* and *hadith* reference books which could be found in my father’s library. I wrote a few pages in which I took the opinion of such prayer being disliked to such an extent that it is prohibited in those areas. Especially prayer in those mosques that were built on top of the graves of the Prophets and Friends of Allaah, using as proof the sayings of the scholars that I had come across in those references.

I then presented my research to my Shaikh al-Burhaani at the end of Ramadaan and he promised to answer it after *Eed*. When I came to him [after *Eed*] he smiled and said, “You have not done anything. Since the places that you take from do not exceed *Haashiya Ibn Aabideen* and *Maraaqi al-Falaah*, and these are not references of *fiqh*.”

I was shocked at this answer and knew that the Shaikh had not grasped all that I had written, since I had in fact quoted from *Umdatul-Qaari*, *Mirqaah al-Mafaateeh*, *Mubaaraq al-Azhaar* and *Haashaiyah at-Tahtaawee*, and they are references that are respected by the people of knowledge.

It was due to this that I saw fit to follow up the issue with wider research. In this way I continued to scour and research until the point was completed with proofs from the Book, the *Sunnah* and the sayings of the Scholars. And so the result of this research was my book known as, “*Tahdheer as-Saajid minint-Tikhaadhil-Qubooril-Masaajid* – [literally: A Warning to the One who Prostrates from taking the Graves as Places of Worship.]”

CALLING TO
ALLAAH,
THE MOST HIGH

“ COMMUNICATION BEGAN BETWEEN ACQUAINTANCES, FRIENDS AND THEIR FRIENDS AND

I made a place in the shop where we could gather and I would teach. Then we saw it fit to move to the house of one of the brothers and then again to another bigger one until we had to rent out the floor of a building for this teaching. The people attending increased in number until the space became congested and the vigour and activity to read *hadith*, its explanations and chains of narrations reached a high level.

We continued like this until the efforts of those who oppose us were directed at us and so matters became restricted such that the lessons were cancelled and the sessions disbanded. And here we are, even now, [still] not free of these restrictions, so we gather whenever it is possible and when something comes between us and being able to meet I turn to writing and verifying instead, two things which I can never cut off from.

THE SPREAD OF
DA’WAH OUTSIDE
DAMASCUS

“ FROM THE RESULTS OF THIS POSITIVE TURN WHICH THE DA’WAH RECEIVED WAS THAT

we arranged a program to visit different places, like Aleppo, Latakia, Idlib, Salamiyah, Homs, Hama and ar-Raqqah, and despite the limited time that I had allocated for these cities, the journeys met with tangible success.

Since a large number of those who were keen to study the science of *hadith* would gather at lectures which resembled seminars, books of the *Sunnah* would be read, questions asked and beneficial debate would flare up.

Except for the fact that this travelling [to spread *da’wah*] doubled the intensity of the wrath from others [directed at us]. So they doubled their efforts to [cause trouble] before those in places of authority and as a result we were in the centre of one problem after another.

SOME OF THE
CONTENTION FACED
BY THE SHAIKH

“THE FIRST OF THESE WAS WHEN A GROUP OF SHAIKHS, AMONG THEM ONE WHOM it was thought would have been a help to the *Salafi da'wah*, set up a petition claiming therein that I was spreading a *Wahhaabi da'wah* to cause trouble amongst the Muslims. So they started collecting signatures for the petition from the people and then submitted it to the *Mufti* of Syria. He, in turn, passed it on to the chief of police who summoned me in and questioned me about the affair, until in the end it came to nothing.

One day a friend of mine who I used to study with asked me about a certain *hadith* concerning the reward of fasting, so I explained to him that [this particular] *hadith* was weak. This friend had heard the *hadith* from the Imaam giving the *Jumu'ah* sermon quoting it as a proof on the pulpit and he could not help but go back to this Shaikh who had given the sermon to mention what he had come to know about the weakness of the *hadith* and the reference where that could be checked. So as a result, the next *Jumu'ah* sermon of this Imaam was an attack on the way of the *Salaf* and he started to accuse those who followed it as being *Wahhaabis*, characterising this way as misguidance, warning the people from approaching them and calling on them to protect their children from its callers. The people listening to this [second] sermon were not all equal in accepting or rejecting what he said, and as a result there was a lot of disorder and confusion.

THE SHAIKH OF
ISLAAM AND AL-
ALBAANI IN THE
SAME PRISON

“IT WAS DECREED THAT I WAS IMPRISONED IN 1389 HIJRI, WHICH CORRESPONDS TO 1969, along with a number of scholars for no other crime than calling to Islaam and teaching it to the people. So I was taken to the fort prison¹ and others in Damascus, and then I was freed after a while, only to be taken back a second time and then exiled to the Island to spend a number of months in the prison there, something which I regard to be in the Way of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic.

¹ *Transl. note:* And this is the same prison that the Shaikh of Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah was imprisoned in many hundreds of years earlier! See the Arabic article here: http://www.alalbany.net/albany_serah.php.

Allaah so decreed it that there was nothing with me [when I was put in prison] except my treasured book, *Sahih Muslim*, a pencil and an eraser. It was there that I engrossed myself in fulfilling my dream of summarising and abridging it [i.e., *Sahih Muslim*], something which I completed in three months, toiling day and night, without feeling any weariness or boredom. And so as a result that which the enemies of the *Ummah* had intended to be a punishment for me was turned on its head and became a blessing for us, with students of knowledge from the Muslims benefitting from it all round the world. So all praise is for Allaah through whose blessings righteous actions are completed.

HOUSE ARREST “ALLAAH, THE MOST HIGH, FACILITATED THE COMPLETION OF MANY KNOWLEDGE based works for me. I would not have had the opportunity to have given them the required time if my life had continued on the path it was on. [And this was] because some of the successive governments had prevented me from going out to the cities of Syria for my monthly lectures where I would call to the Quraan and the *Sunnah*, and this is what is more commonly known as ‘house arrest.’

Likewise during these successive periods I had also been prevented from giving any of the many knowledge based lectures that I used to deliver, the preparation for which used to consume a large portion of my time. This took away a lot of the work that I was doing and came between myself and meeting lots of people who used to take a great amount of my time.²

APPOINTED AS A LECTURER AT MEDINAH UNIVERSITY “I WAS A LECTURER IN THE SCIENCE OF *HADITH* AT THE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY [IN Medinah], from 1381 [1961CE] to the end of 1383AH [1963CE]. In my car I would take with me whichever students I happened to meet on the way to the university and also back to Medinah. So at all times, my car would be full of them, going and coming.

² *Transl. note:* i.e., all of this gave the Shaikh extra time to get busy with his research and writings, may Allaah have mercy upon him.

HIS SHAIKHS “AS FOR OUR SHAIKHS TODAY, THEN THEY ARE HEEDLESS OF THIS LEGISLATED RULING.

BENEFITTING FROM HIM Many of them will intend to go and pray in mosques such as this [i.e., mosques with graves in them or built on graves etc.]. I used to go with some of them to pray with them at the grave of Shaikh Ibn Arabi—when I was young and when I had not yet understood the *Sunnah*! Then when I learnt of the prohibition of that I discussed it with this Shaikh [who I used to go with] many times until Allaah, the Most High, guided him and he refrained from praying there. He would later acknowledge that and would thank me saying that I was a reason for him being guided. May Allaah, the Most High, have mercy on him and forgive him. And all praise is due to Allaah who guided us and we would not have been guided were it not for the fact that Allaah guided us.

WHAT HE WOULD SAY WHEN PRAISED “HE WOULD REPEAT THE SUPPLICATION OF ABU BAKR, THE TRUTHFUL, “O ALLAAH! DO not hold me to account for what they say. And make me better than what they think. And forgive me that which they do not know.”

HIS MIGRATION FROM DAMASCUS TO AMMAN, JORDAN “INDEED ALLAAH, THROUGH HIS WISDOM, HAS MADE A REASON FOR EVERYTHING AND an appointed term for every affair, and He has decreed everything in a most excellent way. Part of which was that I migrated with my family from Damascus in Syria to Amman [in Jordan], at the beginning of Ramadaan in the year 1400AH [1980CE]. So I undertook the steps to building a house there which I could betake myself to for as long as I was alive and Allaah, through his great favour and grace, made its completion easy. I began to live there after a lot of hard work and an illness affected me as a result of the effort I put in from purchasing the land, putting down the foundations and [finally] building the house, and I still suffer from it a little, and all praise is due to Allaah in every condition and all praise is due to Allaah through whose blessings righteous actions are completed. So it was natural that this would divert me from what I was used to doing in Damascus [where I had been] devoting myself to knowledge both studying and teaching, writing and checking—especially since my personal library was still in Damascus for I had not been able to have it transferred to Amman due to well known difficulties and obstacles. I would console myself daily and wish for it,

saying [to myself] that very soon the water will return to its course, but how often the winds flow [in directions] opposite to that which the sailors long for. For as soon as some of our brothers in Jordan realised that I had settled at home they started to request that I resume the lectures that I used to give them in the years gone by before I migrated to Amman—since I used to travel to it every month or two, giving them a lesson or two on each journey. They persisted in their request and so even though I had not decided to give any lectures so that I could spend what remained of my energy and life to complete some of my knowledge-based projects—and how many there are—I saw that I had to fulfil their good [natured] request and desire. So I promised good to them and told them that I would give them a lesson every Thursday after *Maghrib* prayer in the house of one of our noble brothers whose house was close to mine.

That was realised, by the Permission of Allaah, and I gave them the first and then the second lesson from the book *Riyaad as-Saaliheen* of Imaam an-Nawawee, and I answered some of their many questions after the lesson, questions which showed their extreme desire for knowledge and to become acquainted with the *Sunnah*.

**HIS SUDDEN
DEPARTURE FROM
AMMAN BACK TO
DAMASCUS AND THEN
TO LEBANON**

“ IT WAS WHILE I WAS PREPARING FOR THE THIRD LESSON THAT I WAS SHOCKED TO hear of that which forced me—in such a manner that I had no choice whatsoever—but to leave Amman and my dependents therein since it was no longer possible for me to stay there. Thus I travelled back to my first place of migration, Damascus, and that was during a Wednesday afternoon, the 19th of the month of *Shawwaal*, 1401AH [August 1981CE]. I arrived there at night in an extremely bleak and sombre state, imploring and beseeching Allaah, the Most High, to avert the evil that has been decreed and also the plots of the enemies.

I remained there for two nights and in the third, after seeking counsel and praying for guidance [*istikhaarah*], I travelled to Beirut with great caution and fear due to what was known of the great trials and tribulations there and the wanton killings. The route to Beirut was surrounded by danger but Allaah, the Blessed and Most High, saved me and made it easy. I arrived at Beirut during the first third of the night, heading to the house of a dear brother of mine, a devoted, close friend

who received me with his well-known kindness, manners and hospitality, and who took me in as a respected and honoured guest, may Allaah reward him with good.

When I settled down in his house and my mind was no longer preoccupied with the difficulties of travelling, it was only natural that I [should] seize the opportunity of this sudden isolation, thus I turned all of my attention to studying and reading in his populous, rich library that was full of books and rare manuscripts, it contained most of the resources that I needed and many others that I did not have in my library in Damascus.

I asked him to show me the catalogue of the manuscripts and photocopied material that were in his hands and which he had written down on cards. He responded to that with an open heart and righteous Islamic manners that were well-known about him. May Allaah reward him with good.³

THE SUCCESSION OF CALAMITIES THAT BEFELL THE SHAIKH WHILE IN LEBANON “DESPITE THE FACT THAT DURING THAT [I.E., CHECKING THE BOOK *BIDAAYATUS-Sool*] I suddenly received the disturbing news of the death of my older brother, Naaji Abu Ahmad during the Hajj season, I continued the book’s completion while asking Allaah to have mercy upon him, seeking patience through its completion. For he died and he was the best of my brothers, the most sincere to me, the one who responded with the most vigour to my call, had the most concern for it and enthusiasm in calling to it, so may Allaah be greatly merciful to him and grant us, all of my brothers, his children, grand-children and in-laws patience during this calamity that has befallen them, and may He make us good followers to an excellent predecessor, and raise us all with him under the banner of the Leader of the children of Aadam, ﷺ, **“But only one who comes to Allaah with a sound heart.”** To Allaah we belong and to Him we shall return. O Allaah! Recompense me for this calamity and replace it with something better. O Allaah! Forgive Abu Ahmad and raise his ranks among those who are guided, make his offspring from the righteous, forgive us and him, O Lord of the Worlds, expand his grave for him and fill it with light!”

³ Transl. note: It was as a result of this journey that the Shaikh completed his book, *Raf‘ul-Astaar*.

In his book *Talkhees Ahkaam al-Janaa'iz*, p. 24, our Shaikh said, “My older brother Muhammad Naaji Abu Ahmad passed away during the *Hajj* season of last year (1401AH/1980CE) upon a righteous action *inshaa Allaah*, at the *Jamaraat* while he was sitting with some of his friends who were also performing *Hajj*. One of them later mentioned to me that someone sitting with him had offered him a cup of tea with his left hand, so he said to him, “My brother, give it to me with your right hand and do not oppose the *Sunnah*,” or words to that effect—and then he passed away straight after he said that. May Allaah have mercy on him and gather us and him with, “... **the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous, and how excellent are these as companions!**” An-Nisaa 4:69

HIS ESCAPE FROM BEING KILLED IN BEIRUT “TRIALS, TRIBULATION AND MURDER FOR NO REASON STILL CONTINUED (I.E., IN Lebanon) until my family and I were almost about to become another of its casualties through bullets that some snipers had fired at us from war-torn buildings on the 2nd of *Safar* 1399AH [January 1979CE]. My car was struck in three places and the hits were on the verge of being fatal but Allaah kept us safe such that we did not receive a single wound to our bodies whatsoever, and all praise is due to Allaah through whose blessings righteous actions are completed.

MIGRATING FROM BEIRUT TO THE EMIRATES “ALLAAH DECREED FOR ME THAT I TRAVEL FROM BEIRUT TO SHARJAH TO ONE OF OUR brothers there, and he took me in as a guest in his home, may Allaah reward him with good.

HIS JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS “SO MAY ALLAAH HAVE MERCY ON A SERVANT WHO POINTS OUT MY MISTAKE TO me and guides me to my faults, since it is easy for me—with Allaah’s permission and his granting of success—to take back any mistake whose fault is made clear to me, and my books which are printed for the first time and the corrections that are made therein [in later editions] are the greatest witness to that. And would that the people who refute us inform us of such benefits [i.e., corrections] so that we could return to the correct opinion [in any matter where we are mistaken], whilst acknowledging their excellence and giving them thanks. And the infallible one is the one who Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, grants infallibility to.

HIS METHODOLOGY REGARDING HADITH CLASSIFICATION It is befitting that I mention that I do not blindly follow anyone when giving a verdict about those *hadiths*. Rather I follow the knowledge-based rules that the People of *Hadith* [*Ahlul-Hadith*] laid down, and which they traversed upon when issuing verdicts concerning *hadith*, as to whether they are authentic or weak, and that was a time when the Islamic way of life and knowledge was flourishing. I hope from Allaah, the One free of all defects and the Most High, that I have been given the ability [*tawfiq*] to follow that way, and to show it, or even part of it, to the Muslims in a practical way, hoping that from the Muslim youth there will be those who renew implementation of these principles, principles which are from the most precise of what methodological, scientific thought has seen throughout the differing ages of mankind, as a group of orientalists and others like them from the opposition have borne witness to. And of old it was said, “Excellence is what the enemy bears witness to.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME “I TURNED AWAY FROM REFUTING IT A SECOND TIME, DESIRING TO SAVE TIME thereby.

HIS METHODOLOGY IN ORGANISING THE HADITHS IN HIS COLLECTIONS OF HADITH NAMED AS-SILSILAH AND AD-DA’EEFAH “I DID NOT FOLLOW A SPECIFIC ORDER WHEN COMPILING THE *HADITHS*, RATHER [I listed them] as I came across them.

EXAMPLES OF HIS PATIENCE “I CAUSED MYSELF TO GO HUNGRY AT THE END OF 1379AH [1959CE] FOR FORTY consecutive days—I did not eat any food during those days whatsoever, nothing but water entered my stomach. That was in the desire to be cured from certain ailments, and [at the end of it] I was [indeed] cured from some but not others. Before doing this I had sought a cure with some doctors for close to ten years without any apparent benefit. I took away two tangible benefits from this forced hunger:

The first: the ability of a person to endure hunger for such a long period of time in opposition to what many people think.

The other: that going hungry can help in curing obesity related ailments as Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allaah have mercy upon him, mentioned, just as it can help with other illnesses as many people have [tried and] experienced. Yet it does not help with all illnesses and with all body types, in contrast to what the author of the book, ‘Seeking Cures through Fasting,’ a European author, claimed. And over all those endowed with knowledge is the All-Knowing.

HIS FATHER ASKING HIM ABOUT A HADITH “SO I SAW FIT THAT I SHOULD SPEAK ABOUT IT, CLARIFYING ITS DEFECTS—especially when the closest of people to me had asked me about it, and that was none other than my father, may Allaah have mercy upon him, and reward him on my behalf with the best of rewards.

SHAIKH MUSTAFAA AZ-ZARQAA ASKING HIM ABOUT HADITHS “AND THIS HADITH WAS ONE OF THOSE THAT THE NOBLE TEACHER MUSTAFAA AZ-ZARQAA presented to me, desiring that I verify and check it, and this was on the 15th of the Islamic month of *Jumaada ath-Thaani*, 1371AH which corresponds to the 12th of March, 1952.

HIS JOURNEYS IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE **E**^{GYPT} During the short time that I spent in Cairo and Alexandria it was only possible for me to meet but a few of the people of knowledge and excellence, for example, the author of Islamic works Muhibbud-Deen al-Khateeb, Ustaadh Muhammad al-Ghazaali [who the Shaikh went on to refute later, *Transl. note*], Shaikh Abdur-Razzaaq Afeefi and Shaikh Abdul-Aziz ar-Raashid.

While I was in Cairo I would go—every time the opportunity presented itself—to *Daar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah* to study the manuscripts of the books of *hadith* there. I did the same when I left it and went to Alexandria, going to its library known as *Al-Maktabah al-Baladiyyah*, and I received copious and important benefits from both of these libraries. From this second library, I copied

out with my own hand a treatise of al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar al-Asqalaani in which he checked and verified the *hadiths* which al-Haafidh al-Qizweeni brought in the book *Masaabih as-Sunnah* and he judged therein that they were fabricated.

Aleppo

For many years one of my habits had been that I would travel to Aleppo for a week every month, spending it, or the great majority of it, in its only library there which is full of manuscripts, called *Maktabah al-Awqaaf al-Islaamiyyah*. So I would spend hours there every day studying its manuscripts, copying what was of importance from it for my knowledge-based projects. In addition to that I would also study the *Sunnah* and its sciences with some of those who desired knowledge, giving them a number of lessons every week [that I was there].

His Journey to *Baital-Maqdis* [Jerusalem]

And I travelled to Jerusalem for the first time on the 23rd of the Islamic month of *Jumaada al-Awwal*, 1385^{AH} [September 1965^{CE}], when the governments of Jordan and Syria agreed to allow their residents to travel freely between both countries without a passport. So I seized the opportunity and travelled and prayed in the Al-Aqsaa mosque. I visited the Rock, just to see it, since it has no [specific] excellence [mentioned] in the light of the *Sharee'ah*, in contrast to what the majority of the people think and what the government advocates.

Spain

In the month of *Rajab*, 1392^{AH} which corresponds to August, 1972^{CE} [he travelled to] Andalus when he was called to attend a conference for the unity of Muslim students held in Granada.

Morocco

My first journey to Morocco was at the end of the fourth month [*Rabee ath-Thaani*] in the year 1396^{AH} [1976^{CE}].

Qatar

In the blessed month of Ramadaan in 1392^{AH} [1972^{CE}, I travelled to Qatar] and in early *Rabee al-Awwal* in the year 1402^{AH} [1982^{CE}].

His Second Journey to the Emirates

I returned to it on the 29th of March 1985^{CE} with official permission, numbered 1094/i, then I left on the 5th of April 1985^{CE} as is recorded in my passport with number 284024 sr/77.

HIS PERSEVERANCE **“** INDEED FROM THE BLESSINGS OF ALLAAH UPON ME IS THAT SINCE MORE THAN
IN SEEKING ten years ago I had gathered thousands of *hadiths* in more than forty
KNOWLEDGE volumes, all referenced to their numerous sources. I wrote them down in

my own handwriting from hundreds of preserved manuscripts in a number of different well-known libraries, such as the *Maktabah adh-Dhaahiriyyah* in Damascus, the *Al-Awqaaf al-Islaamiyyah* library in Aleppo, the *Maktabah al-Mahmoodiyyah* in the Prophet’s Mosque in Medinah, Aarif Hikmah’s library in Medinah al-Munawwarah, and other libraries which contained priceless books on *hadith*, on benefits, *seerah*, history, and biographies—things which have still not been printed to this day. So every time that I would have to research the chain of narration of a *hadith* in the book *Al-Jaami as-Sagheer* or its additions, I would return to these volumes, which were organised alphabetically, and I would find the *hadith* in them with its chain of narration referenced back to the same source that Suyooti himself and other than him had sourced it to.

And it is from this that the secret becomes apparent to whoever among the scholars comes across some of my books in the various knowledge-based subjects—when they see that despite its size, just one work such as the Prophet’s Prayer Described, صلى الله عليه وسلم, used scores of manuscripts of books that most people have not even been able to discover the names of, let alone read and become acquainted with the *hadiths*, the chains of narrations, wording, and supporting narrations that they contain!

In the same way Allaah made it easy for me to compile a detailed index, composed of everything that is in this well-established library, from the books of *hadith* in their varying forms, like the *Musnads*, the collections, selections, benefits, treatises of *hadith* collected by a specific scholar, biographies and others. Pointing out therein that which has not been mentioned in the [official] index of the library to this day, and I arranged this index based upon the names of the authors, in alphabetical order. I

did the same with their actual works, arranging them in this order under the name of each author, writing a very brief biography mentioning in it the date of birth, death and whether he was trustworthy or weak as a narrator and so on. Finally at the end I placed a general index including all of the books also arranged in alphabetical order.

THE PROJECT TO WHICH HE DEDICATED HIS LIFE, ‘BRINGING THE SUNNAH CLOSER TO THE UMMAH’ “THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED PROJECTS THAT I HAVE IS WHAT I have called, ‘*Bringing the Sunnah Closer to the Ummah.*’ I intended therein to gather all that I could that was authentic from the sayings of the Prophet, ﷺ, in one book, upon the methodology of the scholars of *hadith* and their knowledge-based principles in differentiating between those narrations that are authentic and weak. I ask Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, that he makes its realisation easy for me.

For verily I spent my youth on it, as I did my middle years, and I am completing it, even now, during my old age, all the while asking Allaah, magnificent in His Loftiness, that I be from among those concerning whom the Prophet, ﷺ, said, ‘*The best of you are those who live long and who excel in good deeds,*’ hoping from Him, the Majestic in His Glory, that I be granted a good ending, and death upon *eemaan*.⁴

⁴ *Transl. note:* The following paragraph is a completion of the one above which was not included in the original compilation: “And in conclusion [to the volume he was writing about], it has not deluded me that I give my thanks and gratitude to my eldest daughter, Umm Abdullaah, who facilitated the proof reading of this volume, and drew ones attention to matters that any author can overlook, let alone one who has reached eighty years of age; things such as missing out a word or sentence, or drawing ones attention to places where *hadith* checking has been repeated, or where I did not complete a discussion concerning it and so on, so may Allaah reward her on my behalf with the best of rewards. Likewise the brother Ali [Hasan] al-Halabi, I have benefitted from the notes he wrote on my handwritten original, and some of it he wrote scores of years ago, others he had written on the draft copy that he had had the opportunity to take a look at. So he, and all others who played a part in getting this volume published under the supervision of my brother-in-law, Nidhaam Sakjahaa, the owner of *Al-Maktabah al-Islaamiyah* in Jordan, have my deepest gratitude and thanks.”

HIS GOAL IN LIFE “IN REALITY, MY ENTIRE GOAL IN THIS LIFE—AFTER [AIMING TO] FULFIL THE ACTIONS

and rights that Allaah has made obligatory upon me—is nothing but trying to acquaint the Muslims by way of study, lectures and books that I write, with the authentic biography of the Prophet, صلى الله عليه وسلم, [authentic] from every angle as much as I am able to do. And to encourage them to take it as the singular example for them to follow as Allaah [Himself] encouraged them to do in His, the Most High’s, saying, **“Indeed in the Messenger of Allaah you have a good example to follow for he who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much.”** [Al-Ahzaab 33:21] And therein lies the key to their happiness in this life and the next.

HIS ADVICE TO THE UMMAH “I ADVISE THE UMMAH TO RETURN TO HOLDING FIRM TO ITS RELIGION, THE BOOK

of its Lord, and the authentic *Sunnah* of its Prophet, acting upon it in all aspects of life, shrouding itself in its excellence and manners, and that it judges everything that it takes as religion against the Book of Allaah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger, holding firm to what agrees with them both and disregarding whatever opposes them. Since the affair is as the great Imaam Maalik ibn Anas, the Imaam of the place of *hijrah* [i.e., Medinah] said, “Whoever introduces an innovation into Islaam believing it to be good, has assumed that Muhammad, صلى الله عليه وسلم, betrayed [his delivery of] the Message. Read the saying of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, **‘This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islaam as your religion.’** [Al-Maa’idah 5:3] And the latter part of this nation will not be rectified except by that which rectified its first part.”

AL-ALBAANI WAS NOT THE HEAD OF ANY SECT OR GROUP “THE ARTICLE⁵ DID NOT SUFFICE WITH THIS ALLEGATION [ALONE], BUT RATHER

added another to it, which related to me personally and which was more manifest in its falsehood than its previous allegations, so it mentioned, “And a person by the name of Naassirud-Deen al-Albaani heads it.” So this is a lie and total falsehood, and everyone who knows me personally bears witness to that. For verily my devotion to authoring written works and checking and verifying for more than half

⁵ *Compilers note:* An article written by a minister in one of the Emirates and which was then circulated in a number of newspapers like *Al-Bayaan* and which threw many accusations against the Salafis.

a century comes between me and this alleged headship. And this would have been if my soul inclined towards that, then how can it be when it is in direct opposition to my natural disposition which inclines to a knowledge-based approach?!

READING SOME OF THE MUSNAD WORKS

The Musnad of Abu Ya'laa
“That is what will become apparent after I finish reading all of the *Musnad* of Abu Ya'laa, if Allaah, the Most High, wills.” “... Then I completed reading it in its entirety.”

The Musnad of Ibn Abee Shaibah

I found the second volume of it in the general library in Ribat, I read it and benefitted from it and that was during my first journey to Morocco at the end of the fourth month in the year 1396AH [1976CE].

PRAYING ISTIKHAARAH WHEN MAKING A JUDGEMENT ON A HADITH

“ So [CONCERNING THE HADITH IN QUESTION] I PRAYED TO ALLAAH, THE MOST HIGH, for guidance [*Istikhaarah*] and then placed it here [i.e., in his book *As-Saheehah*] due to its being strengthened when all of its varying paths of narration are taken into consideration.

HIS FOLLOWING THE BOOK AND THE SUNNAH AND ABANDONING BLIND FOLLOWING

“ WHEN I LAID DOWN THIS METHODOLOGY FOR MYSELF, I.E., HOLDING FAST TO THE authentic *Sunnah*, and implemented it in this and other books which will soon spread among the people, if Allaah so wills, I was upon certain knowledge that it would not please all groups and sects. Rather that some if not most of them would direct their verbal attacks at me along with their written reproach. And there is no problem in that, since I know that pleasing the people is an unattainable goal, and that, “*Whoever pleases the people through the displeasure of Allaah will be left by Allaah in the trust of the people,*” as the Prophet, ﷺ, said. How excellent was the saying of the one who said, “And I will never be safe from the abusive saying, even if I were in a cave on a rugged mountain; and who is it that can escape from the people safe and sound, even if he disappeared between the wings of an eagle.”

So it is sufficient for me that I hold this to be the most upright path which Allaah, the Most High, ordered the believers with and which Muhammad, the Chief of the Prophets clarified, and which the Pious Predecessors from the Companions, their students and those who followed them, traversed upon. Included among them are the four Imaams to whose schools of thought the majority of Muslims associate themselves today. All of them were in agreement concerning the obligation of sticking to the *Sunnah* and returning to it and abandoning every statement that opposed it, no matter how great the one who made it was since his, ﷺ stature is greater, his path more upright. Thus, I followed their guidance and their footsteps, implementing their orders to stick to the sayings of the Prophet, ﷺ even if the *hadith* opposed what they [themselves] said. These orders had the greatest impact in my perusal of this straight way and my turning away from blind following. So may Allaah, the Most High, reward them with good on my behalf [for the benefit I received from them].

**HIS TAKING
BOOKS AS HIS
COMPANY AND
COMPANIONS**

“SO I SAY: NEVER! THESE JUDGEMENTS ARE NOT OFF-HANDED, BUT ARE THE FRUITS OF
devoting myself to this noble branch of knowledge and specialising in it for
more than half a century for the sake of Allaah, the Blessed and Most High—full
of interest and desire and painstaking effort to acquire it, made successful by

His permission, the Mighty and Majestic. Toiling day and night, with a broad ranging, precise and rare pursuance of the texts of *hadiths*, their wordings and paths from numerous books where those *hadiths* are mentioned with their chains of narrations; such as books of Quranic exegesis [*tafsir*], biographies, history, heart softening narrations and abstinence from the world, not to mention the books which are specific to *hadiths*, whether manuscripts or in other forms. And nothing proves this more than ‘the story of the lost paper’ which I mentioned in the introduction to my book, ‘The Index of Manuscripts of the *Dhaahiriyyah* Library,’ which the Arabic Academy of Damascus printed, so refer to it [for this story] (pp. 4-7), for in it is a testimony and a lesson for one who will take heed.

Part of this is that Allaah gave me the opportunity, through His Grace and Bounty, to accompany hundreds, rather thousands of the people of knowledge and excellence in different fields; enjoying their company all those blessed years [through their books], such gatherings whose worth and

pleasure none can know except those who have experienced it themselves. And the one who said the following [lines of poetry] about them has spoken the truth:

“We have sitting companions whose speech we never tire of; wise, trustworthy whether they are present or not; benefitting us with their knowledge, knowledge of what has passed by; intellectual, disciplined and of sound opinion; without fear of any commotion or evil companionship; not fearing from them an [evil] tongue or a [striking] hand; so if you said, ‘[They are] dead!’ You would not have lied; and if you said, ‘[They are] alive!’ You would not be disproved.”

I have not ceased to take from their knowledge and pick from their fruits—especially the people of *hadith* and narrations [*Ahlul-Hadith wal-athar*] from them such that, with Allaah’s Bounty and granting of success, I was able to gather thousands of *hadith* and narrations, [along with their] paths and chains of narration, weak and very weak chains, [and this was] something which was a great help in recognising their defects and differentiating between the authentic and the weak from them. So the result of all this were those books I authored which I spent numerous years upon.

THE STORY OF THE LOST PAPER “ I HAD BEEN SUFFERING FROM A MILD EYE AILMENT FOR OVER TWELVE YEARS SO AN EYE specialist advised me to give them some rest and stop reading, writing and working (repairing watches) for six months.

I heeded his advice initially, leaving all of those things for two weeks approximately—then my soul started to entice me, pushing me to do something during this tedious recess, something which would not, in my opinion, go against what the doctor had advised. I recalled a manuscript I had seen in the library entitled *Dhammul-Malaahee* of Ibn Abid-Dunyaa which according to my knowledge had not been printed at that time. So I said to myself, ‘What harm is there in getting someone to copy it out for me? And by the time the manuscript would be copied out and the time to check this copy against the original would come round, a reasonable amount of time would have elapsed for my eyes to have rested. And this would not demand an amount of effort which would

compromise my health situation, and then I could check it at my own pace after that, verifying its *hadiths* and then we could print it, all in stages so that I would not overburden myself!

When the person assigned to copy out the manuscript had reached half way he informed me that there was a missing part. I told him to continue copying it out until he finishes it, and then we would compare it to the original. [When he had finished] I checked and ascertained that there indeed was a missing part like he had indicated. I estimated it to be about four pages long.

I began to ponder over it and how I could come by it? This manuscript was kept in one volume amongst many which were stored in the library in the section entitle *Majaamee*. Each of these volumes on the whole had numerous treatises and books within it, with differing hand-writing, topics and paper different in both colour and size. So I said to myself, 'Maybe the manuscript compiler accidentally bound it in one of these other volumes.' Thus I flung myself into searching for it in sequence with untold enthusiasm and energy.

And I forgot—or I made myself forget—the ailment in my eyes! So whenever I remembered it I was never short of justifications to continue, like saying that this research would not adversely affect [the eye rest] since there was no writing or strenuous reading involved!

I had gone through only a few manuscripts when my attention was drawn to the titles of some of the treatises and works by famous scholars and well-known preservers of *hadith*. So I would stop at them, search them, study them, wishing that they would be copied out and checked and then printed. But most times I would find them to be missing parts and chapters, so I would find the second and not the first for example, and would thus not record them in my index. I continued searching for the lost paper, but in vain, until finally I completed going through all of the volumes that were in the *Majaamee* section and which totalled 152.

Moreover, during this search I had started to pen down the titles of some of the books that had appealed to me and what encouraged me in that was the fact that during the search I had come across some of the missing parts of manuscripts that I had not recorded before [due to them having been deficient, and now that the missing parts had been found and the manuscript was complete he could record their names].

Since I could not find the lost paper among the aforementioned volumes, I said to myself, ‘Perhaps it was wrongly placed in one of the volumes of the books of *hadith* collections, stacked in the library under the *hadith* section!’ Thus I started to go through this section, volume by volume, until I went through them all without finding the lost paper. Yet I recorded [in my index] as many names of treatises and books as Allaah, the Most High, willed.

In this way I continued to justify and entice myself by saying that I would come across the lost paper. So in the search for it I would go from looking in the volumes and treatises of one branch of knowledge to the next—**until I had gone through all of the manuscripts kept at the library and which numbered approximately ten thousand, but still I never found the lost paper.**

Yet I never despaired.

For there was a section in the library where stacks and piles of papers and various scrapbooks were kept, the origins of which were not known—so I started to go through them, carefully and precisely, but [again] without success.

It was then that I began to believe that I may not be able to find the lost paper.

Yet after thinking about this situation I found that because of it Allaah, the Blessed and Most High, had opened a towering gateway of knowledge for me, which I had been ignorant of just as others like me had. [And this was the fact that] the *Dhaahiryyah* Library [in Damascus] contains a treasure of books and treatises in various branches of beneficial knowledge which our forefathers, may Allaah, the Most High, have mercy on them, left for us, and that it has rare manuscripts which most likely cannot be found in other libraries across the world and which have still not been printed to this day.

So when this [reality of the value of material in the library] became clear to me and was established in my heart, I resumed the study of all of the library’s manuscripts, from the first to the last. For the second time.

[This time round I did so] in light of the experience I had gained from my previous search where I had [only] recorded selections [that I had chosen] from the books—now I started to record every single thing that [I came across which] was associated with the knowledge of the science of *hadith*. Not coming upon the minutest detail except that I recorded it, even if it came from one [stray] piece of paper from a book or volume whose origin was not known.

It was as though Allaah, the Blessed and Most High, was preparing me through all of this for the third and final stage which was the actual study of these books, a detailed study, [so that I could] pull out from them the Prophetic sayings along with their chains of narration and paths, and [any] other benefits.

This index was the result of individual effort, a personal drive, from someone who was not employed at the library or assigned to it, and as such the necessary aids to review the manuscripts, study them and search the parts of them that were unknown were not available as would have been the case for someone who was employed by the library or assigned to do such a job by the administration.

So it was only natural that I face some hardship during that research—and there were days that came by me where I would have to perch up a ladder, and then climb up it and stay there for hours on end in that very spot to study it [as] quickly [as was possible]. So when I would choose something from it which I would want to study and scrutinise deeply, I would ask the librarian to take it down for me to the desk ...

AL-ALBAANI
AND ABDUL-
FATTAAH ABU
GHUDDAH

“ I FIRST MET SHAIKH ABDUL-FATTAAH ABU GHUDDAH IN HIS CITY, ALEPPO, MORE THAN twenty years ago approximately. I realised that he was a man who was bigoted towards the *Hanafi madhhab* such that he blindly followed it when in his mosque in Aleppo he agreed to the permissibility of treating someone with alcohol under the supervision of a skilled, Muslim doctor.

So I said to him, “This is not enough. The doctor must also be well-acquainted with the *Sunnah*. For in the *Sunnah*, for example, alcohol has been described as being a disease and not a cure. So

how can a Muslim doctor who knows the *Sharee'ah* prescribe a cure which the Prophet, ﷺ, described as being a disease?!" He said, "Perhaps the *hadith* is weak or not authentic!" I replied, "How can it be when it is in *Sahih Muslim*?" He said, "We will go back and check it to make sure." One of the people who was present and he was a friend to both parties in the debate said, "So when you do check and find out that it is authentic, will you act upon it or what the *madhhab* says?"

So he replied, "The *madhhab*!"

AL-ALBAANI AND THE PREACHER [KHATEEB] “AN INCIDENT REGARDING A KHATEEB IS FUNNY AND YET WILL MAKE ONE CRY AT THE same time, it is befitting that it is mentioned due to the lesson that can be learnt from it.

A few years ago one of the *khateeb*s from a mosque in Damascus came to me, and he was an exhorter and preacher who would travel to different places [to admonish and remind the people]. He mentioned to me that he had written a book in which he had gathered *hadiths* that he had taken from the books of the *Sunnah* and that he had requested an affluent brother to assist him in getting the book printed. That brother said to him "If *Ustaadh* Naasirud-Deen al-Albaani agrees that the book should be printed then I will help you." Then this preacher asked for my agreement but I refused saying I would not do so until I had taken a look at the book. So he sent the book to me.

When I went through it I found things in it that were strange and deplorable. From this was that he attributed the saying of Eesaa, عليه السلام, which Maalik mentioned to *Sahih Muslim* saying it was from the narrations of Abu Hurairah attributed back to the Prophet, ﷺ, that he, ﷺ, said, "Eesaa said ..."!

When I saw this I was extremely astonished since I was sure that no such *hadith* even existed in the *Sahih* of Imaam Muslim nor in any of the other six books—except for the first sentence from it which is reported in *Sunan at-Tirmidhee* from the *hadith* of Ibn Umar with a weak chain of narration, as I have clarified in *Silsilah al-Ahaadith ad-Da'eefah*, no. 924 or after that.

So I phoned him and told him my opinion about the book and the criticisms and faults that were in it, the strongest being the attribution of the narration of Eesaa, عليه السلام, to the Prophet, صلى الله عليه وسلم. Then I asked him, “Where did you get this from?” So he went quiet for a moment and then said, “Wait for a second until I bring the book.” Then he said to me, and how shocking and alarming what he said was, “Imaam Maalik is the one who attributed the *hadith* to *Sahih Muslim* in the book of Virtue and Maintaining Ties of Kinship ...” and so on. So I said to, “What is this, O Shaikh! Don’t you know that there is huge gap between Muslim and Maalik? That Muslim came after Maalik; that from the Shaikhs of Muslim is Imaam Ahmad, and from the Shaikhs of Imaam Ahmad is Imaam ash-Shaafi’ee and from the Shaikhs of ash-Shaafi’ee is Maalik? So how can Maalik attribute this *hadith* to Muslim when he passed away years before him?!”

So he went quiet in bewilderment and said some words from which I understood that he was saying that Maalik made this statement in his book *Al-Muwatta*! I said, “This is impossible and I will study the issue and clarify the reality to you, if Allaah, the Most High, so wills.”

So I went to *Al-Maktabah adh-Dhaahiriyyah* and reviewed [Imaam Maalik’s book] *Al-Muwatta* with the checking of Muhammad Fu’aad Abdul-Baaqi and it was then that the reason for this foul mistake was uncovered which bred a mistake worse than it! Due to the ignorance of people regarding *hadith* and their lack of diligence and caution concerning it even in the schools and colleges of *Sharee’ah*.

AL-ALBAANI
AND THOSE
ENVOUS OF
HIM

“ So THERE IS NOTHING FOR ME DO BUT TO SEEK REFUGE FROM THEIR EVIL JUST AS OUR

Lord has ordered us in His Book, “**Say: ‘I seek refuge with the Lord of the daybreak. From the evil of what He has created. And from the evil of the darkening (night) as it comes with its darkness; (or the moon as it sets or goes away). And from the evil of the blowers in knots [i.e., those who practice magic]. And from the evil of the envier when he envies.’**” [Surah Falaq] And I hope for my reward from Allaah for this calamity which these transgressing oppressors brought my way. Allaah’s Aid is sought, and there is neither might nor power except with the Permission of Allaah, Allah Alone is Sufficient for me, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs..

HIS LACK OF CONCERN AT WHAT THE PEOPLE SAID IF HE KNEW THE TRUTH WAS ON HIS SIDE “THE OBLIGATION OF TRANSMITTING KNOWLEDGE AND THE FORBIDDANCE OF hiding it is what leads me not to care whether the people are pleased or outraged.

THE HARM HE CAME ACROSS IN AMMAN “MY HOUSE WAS RAIDED BY THE SECRET SERVICE AND SEARCHED EXTENSIVELY FOR seven hours or more. They seized approximately sixty letters that were from different Islamic countries and others. They also seized a number of cassettes of mine and of other students of knowledge on the grounds that they were looking for weapons and explosives! And Allaah’s Aid is sought.

HIS CALL “1) TO RETURN TO THE BOOK AND THE AUTHENTIC SUNNAH, UNDERSTANDING IT according to the methodology of the Pious Predecessors, may Allaah be pleased with them all.

2) To inform and make the Muslims acquainted with their religion of Truth, calling them to practising what it instructs and orders, to adorn themselves with its virtues and manners which will ensure that they earn the pleasure of Allaah, and will make happiness and glory a reality for them.

3) Warning the Muslims from associating partners with Allaah (*shirk*) in all its forms, from innovations and foreign ideologies, from *munkar* and fabricated *hadiths* which have disfigured the beauty of Islaam and prevented the Muslims from progressing.

4) Reviving free Islamic thinking within the boundaries of the principles of Islaam, removing that rigid thinking which has pervaded and taken hold of the intellects of many of the Muslims and distanced them from the pure Islamic sources.

5) Striving to revive an Islamic way of life, establishing an Islamic society implementing the law of Allaah on earth. This is our call, and we call all the Muslims to support this trust that will raise them and spread the abiding message of Islaam.

PURIFICATION AND
CULTIVATION

“FROM AN IDEOLOGICAL AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED PERSPECTIVE I REGARD THE

situation of the Muslims to be better than that of thirty to forty years ago. A quarter of a century ago we used to complain about the lack of Muslims studying modern sciences, it was what the reformers used to talk about.

Then the result of this movement was that the next generation turned to these sciences but at the same time almost totally turned away from the other side, and I mean by that the Islamic sciences, and that has many dangers on the fate of that generation.

As for the remedy to this predicament, then I believe that it rests on two points: purification and cultivation. By purification I mean cleansing Islaam from every thing foreign and all defects. The way to achieve that is firstly to purify the *Sunnah* from the fabricated and weak things that have penetrated it, and then to interpret the Quraan based upon this authentic *Sunnah* and the understanding and thinking of the Pious Predecessors.

By that I do not mean that we stop as regards *tafseer* at the limit the *Salaf* reached, but rather that we adhere to their methodology in *tafseer*, and in doing so there is a unity of direction and an obstruction to becoming separated.

This purification that I am referring to includes purifying that which has reached us as regards Islamic sciences and ideologies, so that we eject everything from it which opposes the sound methodology. It also includes purifying the Islamic ideology from all foreign defects which have crept into the ideology of present day Muslims by way of western education, especially the philosophy and educational training and skills, fields through which it is possible to inject a great amount of poison into the Islamic ideology.

By cultivation I mean nurturing a generation upon the correct, authentic Islamic creed taken from the Book and the *Sunnah*. I make special mention of the nurturing of young children upon worship without excessive talk about the material benefits of worship as some do. So if such material benefits must be mentioned then they should be the last thing that it is fitting to mention.

I do not forget to mention Islamic legislation here, what I see fit is that this subject should be studied upon the foundation of complete submission to the order of Allaah and total trust in His Wisdom without too much mention of its material benefits, and by so doing the student is provided with an invincibility from all plots and an immunity from all poison.

Concerning this, I recall the incident of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah and the importance of submitting to the judgement of Allaah and His Messenger.

HIS EAGERNESS TO IMPLEMENT THE SUNNAH

“WHEN I PERFORMED UMRAH DURING RAMADAAN LAST YEAR I WENT UP TO THE TOP floor of the building in Madeenah in which I had gone to visit one of my friends to check the time for sunset since I was fasting. So the call to prayer was not given except thirteen minutes after sunset! As for Jeddah, then I went to the top of the building in which one of my in-laws lived so the sun had hardly set when I [immediately] heard the call to prayer and so I thanked Allaah for that.

SOME OF THE SUNNAHS HE REVIVED

THE SERMON OF NEED (KHUTBATUL-HAAJAH)

“Then Allaah, the Most High, granted me the ability such that I started using this *khutbah* in my lessons and my books, and I was able to spread it in the Islamic world through the treatise I wrote concerning it.

Many of those who loved the *Sunnah* responded to it, and all praise is for Allaah, especially the *khateefs* [preachers] in the mosques, since it had been abandoned before that.

Praying the Eed prayer in the *Musallaa*

From that was that the prayer of the two *eed*s was established in an outside area [*musallaa*] in Damascus, then our brothers in Aleppo revived it there, and then in other cities in Syria, and this *Sunnah* continued to spread until some of our brothers in Amman, Jordan revived it there too.

A FUNNY YET SAD STORY AT THE SAME TIME

“I LED THE PEOPLE IN PRAYER FOR FAJR PRAYER ON A FRIDAY ONCE IN ONE OF THE villages of az-Zubdaani. So after reciting *al-Faatihah* I read what I was able to from *Surah al-Kahf* [the Cave], because my memorisation of *Surah as-Sajdah* was not firm. So when I said the *takbir* [i.e., *Allaahu Akbar*] for the bowing [rukoo] all

of the people went straight into prostration! Since they thought that I had in fact said the *takbir* for the prostration for recitation which occurs in *Surah Sajdah* [since the normal Imaam would read that *Surah* and that is what they were used to.] But those who were immediately behind me noticed that I was bowing so they got up and joined me in that.

As for the ones who were behind the *minbar* and who could not see me, they remained in prostration until they heard me say, “Allaah has heard the one who praises him ...” [*Sami’allaahu liman hamidah*] and so they broke their prayer and a clamour broke loose. After I made the *tasleem* [i.e., said *salaam* to end the prayer] I admonished and reminded them of the obligation upon them to have *khushoo* [humility] in the prayer and to pay attention to what is being recited to them from the *aayaat* of [the Book of Allaah] and that their attention is not distracted in it to [their worldly things such as] farming or milking the animals!

A FINAL SUMMARY The compiler of the book, Esaam Moosaa Haadi, said, “I came across a summary of the biography of our Shaikh al-Albaani, may Allaah have mercy upon him, which he penned down with his own hand in *as-Saheehah*, no. 3203 of the manuscript [it was a manuscript at the time Esaam Haadi wrote these words, *trans. note*], so I wanted to finish this small book by quoting it here. The Shaikh, may Allaah have mercy upon him, said:

“AND CONCERNING THIS IT IS FITTING THAT I SAY FOR THE RECORD AND AS THANKS TO MY FATHER, MAY ALLAAH the Most High, have mercy upon him: And likewise in the *hadith*⁶ there are glad-tidings for us, my father’s family, [since he] migrated with his family from Ashkoderah which was the then capital of Albania; fleeing with his religion from the uprising of Ahmed Zogo, whose heart Allaah caused to go astray, who had started to do to the Muslims of Albania the same thing his predecessor Ataturk had done in Turkey.

Due to this migration of his to Damascus in Syria, I reaped [such blessings], by the Grace and

⁶ I.e., the *hadith*, “*There will be migration after migration. So the best of the people of the earth are the ones who stick to the place Ibrahim migrated to.*” Reported by Abu Daawud, no. 2482.

Mercy of Allaah, that I cannot thank my Lord such as is rightly due to Him even if I were to live as long as Noah, عليه السلام. For it was there that I firstly learned the Syrian Arabic dialect and after that classical Arabic which was what enabled me to know correct monotheism [*tawhid*] which most of the Arabs around me were ignorant of, let alone my family and people, except for a few of them.

Then Allaah granted me the ability, through His Favour and Blessings and without the direction of anyone else, to study *hadith* and the *Sunnah*, its principles and *fiqh* [understanding] this was after having finished school and after having studied parts of *Hanafi fiqh* along with the tools for study such as grammar, morphology and rhetoric with my father and some other Shaikhs.

Then I started to call my brothers and friends to the correction of the creed, and then abandonment of bigotry towards the schools of thought [*madhhabs*], warning them against weak and fabricated *hadith*, encouraging them to revive the authentic *Sunnah* which the elite among them had killed off. A result of that was the establishment of the two *eed* prayers in the *musallaa* in Damascus, then our brothers in Aleppo revived it, then [it was also revived] in other cities in Syria and this *sunnah* continued to spread until some of our brothers in Amman in Jordan revived it there too. ⁷

I also warned the people from building mosques on graves and then praying in them, and authored my book concerning that, entitled, ‘A Warning to the One who Prostrates from taking Graves as Mosques.’ And I shocked the people of my nation and new home with that which they had not heard before: I stopped praying in the Amawi mosque at a time when some of my relatives used to go to it specifically believing that the grave of Yahyaa was in it! In the course of that I met with, from both relatives and others, that which every caller to the Truth meets with, not fearing for Allaah’s sake the blame of the blamers.

I authored some works about some of the bigoted ignoramuses and was imprisoned two times due to the slander that they spread to the nationalistic, Ba’athist rulers and because I had proclaimed

⁷ *Transl. note:* the English translation of Shaikh al-Albaani’s book on praying the Eed prayer in the *musallaa* can be found here: <http://www.islamhouse.com/p/54235>

when asked, “I do not support the current rule since it opposes Islaam ...’ and that turned out to be good for me and for the spreading of my call.

And Allaah has made it easy for me to go out to many Syrian and Arab cities calling to *tawhid* and the *Sunnah*, and then [also] to European cities. While focusing on the fact that there is no way for salvation for the Muslims from the colonialisation, humiliation and ignominy that has afflicted them, that there is no benefit in the Islamic groups and political sects—except by clinging to the authentic *Sunnah* upon the methodology of the Pious Predecessors, may Allaah be pleased with them all. Not by following what the people today are upon whether in matters of creed, fiqh or outlook.

So Allaah caused to benefit from that whatever and whoever from His righteous servants that He wanted to. This became manifestly apparent in their creed, worship, the way they would build their mosques, their appearance and clothes—something which every just scholar will bear witness to and none will dispute except a spiteful one or a charlatan.

For this I hope that Allaah will forgive me all of my sins and that He will write the reward for that for my father and mother, and all praise is due to Allaah through whose blessings righteous actions are completed.

“My Lord! Inspire and bestow upon me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favours which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your Mercy among Your righteous slaves.” My Lord, “... make my off-spring good. Truly, I have turned to You in repentance, and truly, I am one of the Muslims (submitting to Your Will).”

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*Transl. Note:* There follow five pages where the compiler lists the books the Shaikh authored, I have left that out here and maybe we can mention a more updated list in the future since some of the books listed have been printed whereas they were in manuscript form at the time the book was put together. After listing the books, the compiler, Esaam Moosaa Haadi says:

“And this is the last of what I was able to gather about his biography. O Allaah! Send your Prayers upon Muhammad and his family and all of his Companions.

Written by:

Esaam Moosaa Haadi

Amman, Jordan

Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> *Jumaadi al-Aakhirah*, 1421<sup>AH</sup> which corresponds to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2000<sup>CE</sup>.”

And the translation was completed on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2011.

والحمد لله رب العالمين